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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1280  
INFO RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 1682  
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 3565  
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 0197  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1329  
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 5008  
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 1663  
RUEHDG/AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO 0190  
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA 0234  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

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TAGS: [KPAO PREL](#) [PGOV OVIP CI](#)

SUBJECT: SPORTS DIPLOMACY: TENNIS HERO ANDRE AGASSI BIG HIT IN CHILE

¶1. SUMMARY: American tennis legend Andre Agassi generated good will and a media frenzy throughout his March 29-31 visit to Chile. In Santiago for an exhibition match, Agassi participated in clinics for Chile's promising young competitors and disadvantaged players. Headlines called him a true "gentleman," "genius," and "unforgettable," particularly to Chilean spectators and children he coached. Agassi's well-received visit demonstrated how sports diplomacy reaches all sectors of society - touching young lives that might not yet grasp the meaning of traditional foreign policy. End Summary.

Media Superstar and Role Model  
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¶2. U.S. tennis star Andre Agassi generated extensive media coverage during his visit to Chile March 29-31 for an exhibition with Chile's retired tennis ace, and former world number one, Marcelo Rios. Despite losing his tennis match with his former pro-circuit rival, Agassi proved to be a winner among Chileans. An estimated 12,000 spectators turned out for the match, which was billed as a rematch between two former world number one players.

¶3. Several media articles gave prominent coverage to Agassi's clinics with Chilean wheelchair tennis players and about his charitable foundation and promotion of sports in the United States for at-risk youths. The media also made positive mention of Agassi's encouragement to Chile's 2004 Olympic tennis gold medal winner Nicholas Massu, who is currently suffering from a severe slump on the professional tennis circuit. Press articles described Agassi as a "gentleman," "star," and "good natured." One headline read: "Andre Agassi Makes the Dreams of Young Chilean Talents Come True."

¶4. Leading Santiago daily "El Mercurio" reported that the Ambassador brought together Chile's "tennis family" through a dinner in Agassi's honor. In his remarks to Chilean tennis coaches, players, and trainers, the Ambassador emphasized how sports exchanges enhance ties among young people and fosters healthy competition. It prepares players for understanding the concepts of fair play, good sportsmanship, self-discipline and hard work. Sports also serve as a bridge between different segments of society. Channel 4 TV and "La Segunda" noted the Ambassador's praise of Agassi and the importance of role models in the development of young boys and girls.

Sports Diplomacy and the U.S. Image  
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¶5. Andre Agassi represented himself and his country magnificently. He built good will and projected a positive image of the United States. Agassi's visit demonstrated how sports exchanges have a role in diplomacy, increasing mutual understanding and admiration for the U.S. through its sports heroes.

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